Scotland. Ministers 1132 fol. 396

REASONS

VVhy the

MINISTERS, ELDERS,

AND

PROFESSORS,

VVho Proteſted againſt the pretended

ASSEMBLIES at *St. Andrews*, *Dundee* and *Edinburgh*, cannot agree to the Overtures made unto them at the Conference upon the 28. and 29. of *July*, 1652.

Together with the INSTRUCTIONS given by them to ſuch of their number as were ſent to the ſaid Conference.

And the Letter directed to Mr. *David Dickſon*, for communicating their PAPERS.

Printed at Leith *by* Evan Tyler, 1652.

Right Reverend,

WE have now for these fourteen days past, been imployed in using our best endeavors, and waited for Overtures from you, for healing the breach, and removing the differences that are amongst us; And now there being no ground of hope given us, nor any desire made unto us for continuing the Conference, whereby a better understanding might be attained, We have thought good before our parting from this place, to send unto you this inclosed Paper, together with the Instructions given in writing to these who were sent from us to the Conference, the Copy whereof was offered by them to these who were sent from your number, and left with them; Both which Papers we desire you to communicate to those of your meeting.

ry loving Brethren in the Lord.

Edinburgh 29. July 1652.

Subscribed in the name of many Ministers, Elders, and Professors throughout the Land, who desire Truth and Peace.

Directed

For the Reverend Brother Mr. David Dickson, *Professor of Divinity in the Colledge of* Edinburgh.

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REASONS

WHy the

Miniſters, *Elders* and *Profeſſors*,

who Proteſted againſt the Pretended Aſſemblies at St. *Andrews*, *Dundee* and *Edinburgh*, cannot agree to the Overtures made unto them at the conference upon the 28. and 29 of *July* 1652.

Together with the Inſtructions given by them to ſuch of their number as were ſent to the ſaid Conference, And the Letter directed to Mr. *David Dickſon* for communicating the Papers.

ALbeit the Eſſayes and Endeavours which were uſed by us, before our comming hither, for removing of differences and attaining of Union and Peace, upou ſuch grounds as might (indeed) bring forth a diſcovery of our and the Lands Sin, and contribute for removing the guilt thereof, and for ſecuring and promoving the Work of Reformation amongſt us, might in a great part have acquitted our conſciences, and cleared us before the world; yet the deep ſenſe that we had of the many and great prejudices which do enſue to the Work and people of GOD, by our coutinued Diviſions and our ardent deſire of Peace and Union, upon the grounds foreſaid, conſtrained us to lay hold upon the opportunity of your meeting together at this time, and to re-preſent unto you ſome neceſſary and juſt Propoſitions, as a fit ſubject of our conference; and that we were willing to hear what ſhould be offered by you to us, in order to theſe ends; and, that therefore ye would forbear to aſſume unto your ſelves the power of, or conſtitute your ſelves into a Generall Aſſembly. And when we found

found this in-effectuall, and our Union rendered more hopeleſs by your denying a deſire ſo juſt and reaſonable, and ſo agreeable to the practice of former Aſſemblies, as was inſtanced before you by theſe who knew the Records: Nevertheleſſe upon a ſurmiſe of a purpoſe in you to confer with us, we did for divers dayes wait upon you, being deſirous to have ſeen upon your part ſome ſerious applying of your ſelves to the real meanes of healing, and to have found ſolid ſatisfaction unto the things contained in the Propoſitions offered to you by us: Bnt in place of this, the Brethren who were appointed by you to confer with ſome of our number, did intimate unto us, that all which they had in Commiſſion to make offer of, was, that ye were willing to take off the Cenſures inflicted by the former Aſſembly at St. *Andrews* and *Dundee*, and the Cenſurableneſs that perſons, who have tranſgreſſed againſt the Acts thereof might be liable unto, Providing that theſe Brethren Cenſured and deſerving Cenſure, ſhould paſs from their Proteſtation againſt the former and preſent Aſſemblies and Judicially before their Presbyteries and Synods, engage themſelves under their hands, not hereafter to deliver their judgements in Preaching or writing, or any way elſe to hold up the late differences: Which Overture when it was earneſtly deſired by theſe of our number to be given to them in writing according to their Inſtructions, not only becauſe it was divers wayes repreſented by ſuch of your number as did confer with them, but alſo that they might the more perfectly and better underſtand the ſame, and be able to make an exact report thereof to theſe who ſent them, and miſtakes thereupon might be prevented: It was moſt peremptorily refuſed, albeit moſt earneſtly urged and deſired during the whole time of the Conference: Therefore having ſet down the ſame als truely and impartially as our judgements and memories could attain; We do for our own vindication, and ſatisfaction of others give theſe Reaſons following, why we cannot accept thereof.

I. *Becauſe there is hereby no remedy at all offered for the courſe of defection involved in the publick reſolutions, nor for preventing the like for time to come, which is the main ground of difference; but upon the contrary we are required upon the matter to retract our Teſtimonies thereanent, and judicially to give Bonds and Engagements hereafter to be ſilent concerning the ſin and guilt thereof.*

II. *Becauſe*

II. *Because our passing from our Protestation doth import a* 338
reall acknowledgment of the lawfulness and freedom of the Assemblies in regard of their constitution, and of power in them to inflict and take off censures, and so by our own consent, doth not only retract and condemne the testimony which we formerly gave against the same; But also obstructeth the remeading of what is past, and the attaining a lawful, free General Assembly for the time to come, and so wreathes about our own neck, and the necks of the Lords people, the yoke of unfree, corrupt and unlawful Assemblies.

III. *Because the offer which is made, though it contains Immunity in regard of these who have not acquiesced unto, or opposed these Acts for the time past, yet the Acts of themselves do notwithstanding thereof, still stand in force, as a ground of persecution against all these Ministers and Professors, who shal not accept of the conditions contained in this offer, or thereafter fail in performance of the same.*

IV. *Because this offer is so far from reaching satisfaction to all or most part of the Propositions offered by us, that it doth not give satisfaction to any one of them, but pitcheth upon a particular, which ought to be of least consequence with us, (as importing but our personall suffering) without taking notice of the Lands defection, and of those things which do concern the Kingdom and Interest of* JESUS CHRIST, *and the purging of his House; and what a sin and provocation should it be against the Lord, and what a stumbling and grief of heart unto the godly who have concurred in these Propositions, and after such a defection, do expect repentance and reformation, and the purging of his House of corrupt Officers and Members, if we should make such a transaction, as seems to promise present security to our selves, but doth not contribute for preserving of the truth, and attaining a solide peace and union in the Lord.*

V. *We cannot see how the passing from these Propositions, and the taking upon us such engagements for the time to come as are desired, should not involve us in the condemning of our own judgments, and in the acknowledgment of a sin and offence in making these Protestations, and bearing testimony against the Publick Resolutions, and import that what is done by you in taking off of*

censures

cenſures and cenſurableneſs (as you term it) is an Act of meer favour and grace upon your part, unto Delinquents, upon their repentance. And though we hope that We ſhal never be aſhamed, but eſteem it our mercy and glory to acknowledge any thing whereby We have provoked the Lord, or offended others, yet being more and more convinced in our conſciences, that what we did in theſe things was a neceſſary duty, We dare not purchaſe immunity and exemption from Cenſures at ſo dear a rate, as to deny the ſame, we ſhall rather chooſe ſtill to be ſufferers, and to wait upon the iſſue that the Lord ſhal give, then to provock the eyes of his glory, grieve the ſpirits of his People, and wound our own Conſciences by ſo unſatisfying and ſo ſinfull a tranſaction.

And conceiving that, we ſhall not have the opportunity to ſpeak unto you hereafter, as being now about to diſſolve our Meeting; We do from the zeal that we owe to the honour of God, and from the tender reſpect that we owe unto you as Brethren, and for exonering our own Conſciences, moſt earneſtly beſeech and obteſt you, by your appearing before the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, to give your ſelves unto Prayer, and ſearching of your own hearts and way, in Order to Publick Reſolûtions and Actings, untill each of you finde out wherein ye have turned aſide from the ſtraight way of the Lord, and imployed your gifts and power not for Edification, but for grieving the ſpirits of many of the Godly, and ſtrengthening of the hands of the wicked, and to Repent thereof, and to do no more ſo, leaſt wrath be increaſed from the Lord, the godly of the Land more offended, and our breach made wider, and our wound more incurable. If both you and we might obtain mercy of the Lord to know our treſpaſſe, and why he contends, and to accept the puniſhment of our iniquity, and humble our ſelves before him, who knoweth but that he might yet have compaſſion upon us, and pardon our ſins, and heal our Land.

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July

July the 28. Antemerid. 1652.

Mr. *Andrew Cant*, Mr. *Samuel Rutherford*, Mr. *James Guthry*, My Lord *Wariſtoun*, Mr. *Robert Trail*, Mr. *John Nevay*, Mr. *James Naſmith*, being nominated to meet and confer with ſome Brethren, Members of the preſent pretended Aſſembly, the Inſtructions following were given them, and the Meeting doth require and expect that they will walk according thereto.

I. *That they ſhall Declare to the Brethren with whom they are to meet, That as they do adhere to the Proteſtations formerly and lately given in; ſo they do proteſt that they do not meet nor confer with them, nor receive any Papers from them as being in the capacity of Commiſtioners of a Generall Aſſembly, but onely as ſent from a meeting of Miniſters and Elders, wanting any ſuch Authority.*

II. *That whatever be offered by the Brethren with whom they do confer, they deſire to get it in writing from them as the minde of the Meeting whereof they are Members; That it being communicated to us, Anſwer may be given thereunto by our whole Meeting.*

III. *That they do not engage in Conference with them at firſt about the matter of Cenſures; It being neither the chief nor only ground of our grievance; and becauſe with us things of that nature, and any thing of perſonall concernment ought to be of the ſmalleſt value, while there are many things in queſtion betwixt them and us of far higher Conſequence to the Kingdom of Chriſt and his Intereſt; as anent the cauſes of Gods controverſy with the Land, and the way of Remedy and cure of the former and late defection, and the way of preventing the like in time comming; The eſt abliſhing and promo-*

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...ing the Work of Reformation, and the purging of the Kirk, and the like, as are laid before them in our Propositions given in to their Meeting: And that they do intimate to the Brethren foresaid, that we cannot look upon an offer relating only to the Censures upon some of our number as satisfaction to them or us, and that besides what we have said, for other Reasons to be communicated in due time to their Meeting. And that therefore they shall offer to these Brethren, and desire of them that if there be any Conference at all, the subject matter of it may be upon the whole Propositions in the order as they stand.

IV. That in case of their refusing the latter part of the former Article, they shall require and demand from the Brethren of the other Meeting, That they would Declare whether we may expect that those from whom they were sent will either by the said Brethren, or any other way give Answer and Satisfaction to us anent the Propositions, and what is their sense and meaning of the Publick Resolutions, and anent the Constitution, Acts and Proceedings of the Meeting at Dundee, and of this at Edinburgh, and what they minde to do in reference to the same.

V. That in case there be not satisfaction obtained in these so just and necessary things, They do protest their own and our dissatisfaction with any thing that hath been offered by them to us, or answered to our desires first or last. And that they protest for themselves and us, That as we have sought Peace and pursued it by all lawful and possible means, though much in vain on their part: So we are henceforth free from the guilt and blame of the sad prejudices and evil consequences whatsomever, which may follow upon their present way, and their former and future Actings of that nature so contrary and destructive to Edification and Peace.

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FINIS.